

Police dept. gets \$150,000 tech grant

**BY JENNIFER JOHNSON - Niles Herald - 12/23/04
STAFF WRITER**

Enhancing communication is what Niles Police Department officials say they plan to do with \$150,000 in federal law enforcement funding that was recently secured for the department.

Deputy Police Chief Charles Giovannelli said the funding, which was secured by U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-9th, will be used to upgrade technology in the police department's Emergency Operating Center and to purchase an electronic message sign to alert citizens of everything from emergencies to community events.

A brief press conference featuring Schakowsky, Niles Mayor Nicholas Blase and police department officials was conducted Monday morning where the announcement of the federal funding availability was made.

"These are important tax dollars we are giving back to the village of Niles," Schakowsky said.

Giovannelli said new technology in the police building's Emergency Operating Center will allow the department to better communicate with other area communities when emergency situations arise.

He described the new equipment as "sophisticated and modern" and said it will be "twice as good" as what the department currently has in place.

The electronic message sign will likely be installed just northeast of the police station off Milwaukee Avenue.

Giovannelli said it will provide community and civic announcements, and also announce things like severe weather alerts, traffic-related issues and any emergency situations occurring in the area.

"We want to get a message sign in order to get information out to the public," Giovannelli said.

At this time, it is unknown when the department will actually receive the federal funding and when the new communication technology and message sign will be purchased.